

Amendments to the Specification:*Paragraph beginning on page 5, line 3*

A benefit of electrical regeneration of the signal is that the noise is cleaned from the ring. In addition, each individual channel is accessible electrically for any purpose. A disadvantage of this solution, however, is that it is relatively costly in terms of complexity and the requirement to add optical and electrical based hardware to the ring. The electrical based equipment must be managed, adding to the cost and complexity. In addition, the equipment typically consumes a large amount of space. Further, the use of additional electrical equipment lowers the overall reliability of the network as it is another potential point of failure.

Paragraph beginning on page 15, line 26

The invention also enables the remote disconnection of one or more channels from the optical ring. An optical channel is 'disconnected' from the ring by increasing the attenuation of its corresponding attenuator low high enough such that the channel is effectively removed from the ring. Removing unused channels helps to reduce the associated noise and the cross talk between the channels that are in use on the ring. The ability to remove a channel remotely is realized using the ability to set the level of attenuation of the attenuators electrically.

Paragraph beginning on page 15, line 32

Rather than requiring the physical capping off of unused channels, the present invention enables the removal of unused channels remotely, such as from a central management center 123 employed to monitor and control one or more optical ring networks.